UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PLAN
PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

Basic Information

Program Name: Philosophy

College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Department: Philosophy and Religious Studies

Bachelor of Science in Philosophy

Date Plan Submitted: February 6, 2026

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1. **Introduction** (identify college, unit, and degree programs)
   - College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
   - Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
   - B.S. in Philosophy

   Goals:

   1. Develop a comprehensive academic program emphasizing competency in the areas of Logic, Science, and Language; Historical Traditions in Philosophy; and Ethics and Values.
   2. Support students in the development of a critical reflective perspective that balances intellectual autonomy with intellectual humility and openmindedness
   3. Prepare students for professional careers and graduate studies by emphasizing the cultivation of skills of critical thinking, evidence-based analysis, effective communication, and creative problem solving
   4. Support an academic atmosphere of transparent decision-making involving both philosophy faculty and philosophy majors

2. **UCA Philosophy Major Outcomes**

Philosophy Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are derived from the programmatic goals and assess the following competencies:

- **SLO 1: Writing with Clarity** – Demonstrate the ability to express complex ideas with clarity, utilizing structured arguments, thesis development, evidence incorporation, and response to potential objections.
- **SLO 2: Critical Thinking & Analysis** – Formulate clear philosophical definitions, extract logic from complex texts, spot hidden assumptions, and evaluate arguments using formal or informal reasoning.
- **SLO 3: Problem Solving** – Apply theoretical/conceptual frameworks and philosophical reasoning to bridge theory and practice when addressing practical, real-world, or policy-related issues.
- **SLO 4: Vocational Purpose & Reflection (Knowledge of Own Perspective)** – Situate one's own philosophical commitments within a broader, pluralistic framework and articulate how philosophical skills impact personal development and future career trajectory.

For Rubic and Further Breakdown, see *Appendix 1: Philosophy Program Assessment Description and Rubric*

3. Assessment Cycle

Curricular Design Cycle: The curricular design assessment will assess one curriculum area a year, rotating through the four areas in the major: Gateways to the Discipline, Logic Science and Language, Historical Traditions in Philosophy, and Ethics and Values. Capstone courses will be assessed on the same rotation as the Gateways to the Discipline courses. Artifacts collected should include syllabi for all sections of the most recently completed version of the course, even if the course is not taught within the assessment year (e.g. for courses that are taught on an every-other year rotation).

Comprehensive Student Assessment: The comprehensive assessment is intended to assess philosophy majors in their final semester in the program, and will be done on an ongoing basis.

4. Curriculum Map

See *Appendix 2: Program Checksheet and Alignment with SLO's*

5. Assessment Methods and Measures

The Philosophy program will assess student learning through a required capstone experience completed near the end of the major. Students will submit a portfolio or capstone paper that demonstrates their ability to explain philosophical concepts, analyze arguments, and communicate ideas in clear, sustained prose. The assessment committee will evaluate these materials using a shared rubric aligned to the program's student learning outcomes.

The department will use direct assessment as the primary measure of student achievement because it provides evidence of what students can actually do with philosophical content and methods. In addition to evaluating final capstone work, the department may review selected lower-division and upper-division artifacts to measure growth over time. This allows faculty

to compare performance at the introductory, intermediate, and culminating levels of the major.

For further details on the measures associated with this recursive practice, see *Appendix 1.*

6. Data Collection and Review

The Philosophy BS Assessment Plan focuses on Collecting and Reviewing data from two major sources to reinforce ongoing alignment and programmatic coherency:

- The first is curricular design (syllabus/assignments) which is formative and is intended to provide an ongoing alignment of course and assignment design with the four assessed competencies of writing with clarity, critical thinking & analysis, problem solving, and vocational purpose & reflection.
- The second is a summative student assessment which assesses the competencies of philosophy majors in their final semester in the program through the collection of a portfolio that includes: 1) a reflective essay or philosophical autobiography, and 2) three samples of written, recorded, or tested work selected by the student from courses taken in each of the three curricular categories (Logic, Science, and Language; Historical Traditions in Philosophy; and Ethics & Values). Students are encouraged to submit what they consider to be the best representation of their philosophical work in each area.

- When will data be collected for each outcome?
    - Curricular design data will be collected by November 15 for each academic year. Assessments should be completed by March 15 of the same academic year.
    - Data for graduating majors will be collected no later than the last class day of the semester in which they graduate.

- How will data be collected for each outcome?
    - Curricular design data will be collected by the department Curriculum and Assessment Committee. Syllabi may be gathered from the shared repository, but the committee will have to contact individual instructors for the reports and any additional artifacts that will accompany the syllabi. Requests for these should be sent by September 15 of each academic year.
    - Data for graduating majors will be collected either 1) in conjunction with the capstone class, or 2) by individually soliciting feedback for students who are graduating but who are not in the capstone course the semester before they graduate. The department chair will initiate this collection.

- What individuals/groups will be responsible for data collection?
    - The Department Curriculum and Assessment Committee will be responsible for data collection, in coordination with the UCA Philosophy and Religious Studies Assessment Coordinator, Department Chair, and individual instructors

7. Participation in Assessment Process

- Who will participate in carrying out the assessment plan?
    - Philosophy faculty in the UCA Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies will implement the assessment plan.
- What will be their specific role/s?
    - Assessment Coordinator' Role: Provide leadership to the Curriculum and Assessment Committee to collect syllabi and related materials
    - Department Chair Role: Coordinate collection of artifacts from graduating students
    - Individual Philosophy Course Instructor: Submit syllabi and prepare brief qualitative reports on alignment of courses with course design goals for the courses being assessed during each academic year

8. Data Analysis

- How will the data and findings be shared with faculty?
    - The Assessment Coordinator will share data and findings will be shared with faculty in a departmental report during a scheduled faculty meeting
- Who was involved in analyzing the results?
    - Assessment Coordinator, Department Chair, and philosophy instructors
- How are results aligned to outcomes and benchmarks?
    - Following the design of the Philosophy direct assessment framework:
        1. **Formative Assessment (Curricular Design):** Gateways courses (**I**) introduce basic formatting, thesis-building, and logical argumentation. Upper-division requirements (**R**) reinforce these competencies by requiring specialized assignments (e.g., formal logic proofs, ethical issue matrices, or text-extraction briefs).
        2. **Summative Assessment (Senior Portfolios):** Graduating senior portfolios are compiled from student work in their final semester. This requires students to **Apply (A)** all 4 SLOs by submitting:
            - A **Reflective Essay / Philosophical Autobiography** directly mapping to **SLO 4** (Vocational Purpose & Reflection).
            - **Three Written/Recorded/Tested Samples** pulled across the three core programmatic areas (Logic, Science, and Language; Historical Traditions; Ethics and Values) mapping across **SLO 1, SLO 2, and SLO 3**.

9. What are the plans to evaluate students' post-graduate success?

The department will evaluate students' post-graduate success through its alumni survey and other indirect evidence collected through department review. These data will help the program understand how graduates use the intellectual habits developed in our department in graduate school, employment, civic participation, and other settings. We will use those findings to strengthen the major's relevance to career pathways and advanced study.

10. Fall 2026 Philosophy Courses to be evaluated:

Rather than tying to a specific course, all syllabi will be evaluated through the curricular area, so this fall, all gateways courses will be assessed. For comprehensive assessment, rather than courses, this will be all students who are graduating in Fall 2026 with a BS in Philosophy.